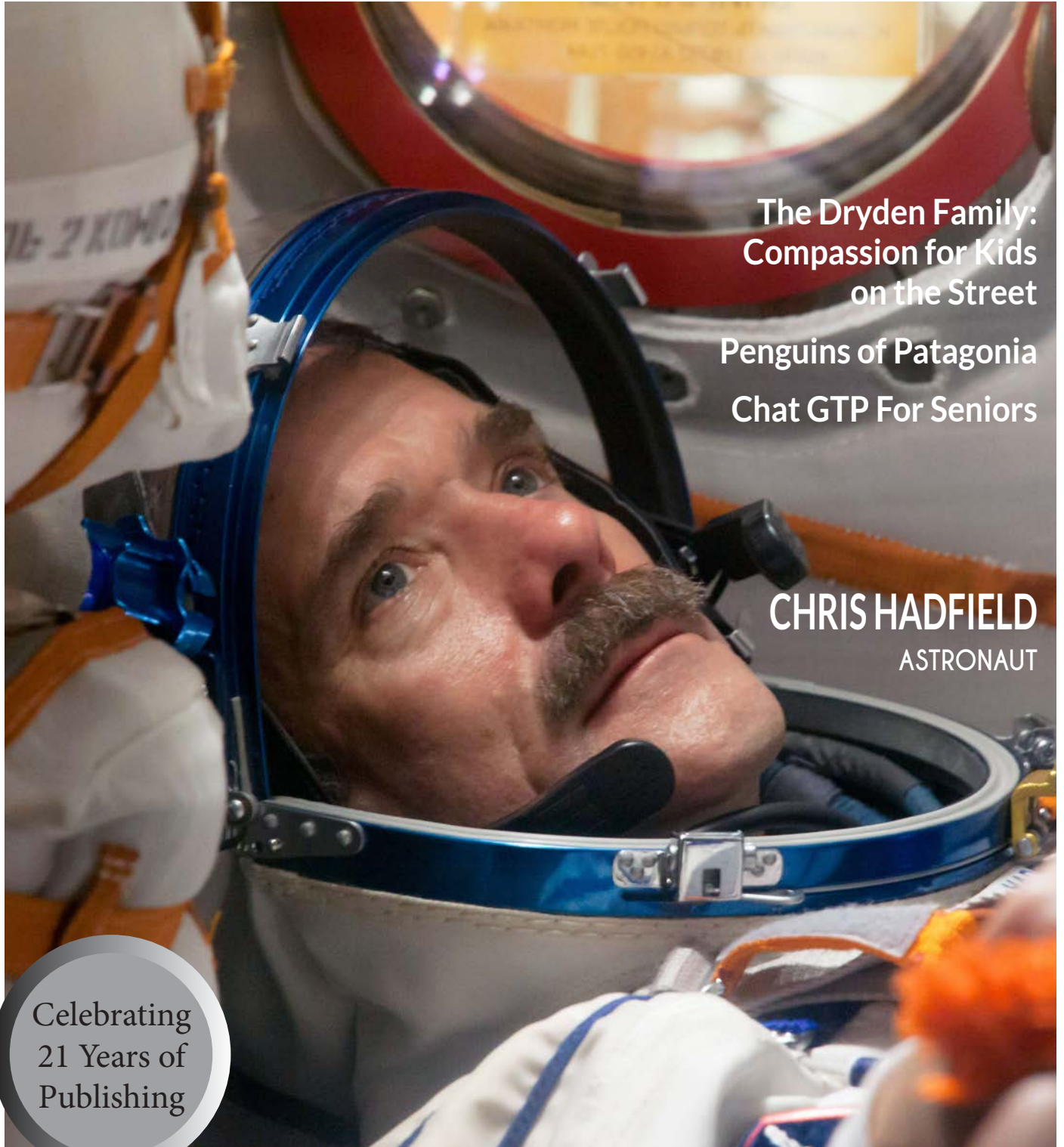


INSPIRED

55+ lifestyle magazine

MAY / JUN 2025



The Dryden Family:
Compassion for Kids
on the Street

Penguins of Patagonia

Chat GTP For Seniors

CHRIS HADFIELD
ASTRONAUT

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250-479-4705

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Subscriptions (6 issues): \$26.25 includes GST, S&H. Canadian delivery only.

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This project is funded in
part by the Government
of Canada

Canada



Cover | Chris Hadfield

Colonel Hadfield is best known as the first Canadian to command the International Space Station but he is now laser focused on the future and family.

Photo: Victor Zelentsov

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True North, Strong and Free

THRIVE BEYOND 55

A Better Way Through Crisis

by BARBARA RISTO



Prime Minister Mark Carney recently shared a powerful insight: “You build your way out of a crisis, you don’t cut your way out.”

Though he was speaking in the context of national recovery, the message carries wisdom for all of us—especially those of us in the 55+ community—as we face personal challenges and crossroads in our own lives.

There comes a time when it’s tempting to shrink back—to cut expenses, cut commitments, even cut pieces of ourselves that once brought joy, in hopes of simply making it through the day. When we face loss, illness, financial strain, or loneliness, retreat can feel like the safest option.

But Carney’s words call us to do the opposite: to build.

Building doesn’t always mean grand gestures or starting something from scratch. Sometimes, it’s about laying

one small brick each day: picking up the phone, walking a little further than yesterday, trying something new, or rekindling an old passion. It’s about saying, “I’m still here, and I still matter.”

Whether it’s nurturing friendships, exploring creative pursuits, or volunteering in our communities, building gives shape and purpose to our days. It gives us something to look forward to—and something to leave behind.

Yes, building takes energy and hope. But after decades of life experience, we know that the things worth having are rarely handed to us. They’re built, day by day, moment by moment. And there’s still time—plenty of it—to keep shaping a life that feels meaningful.

Cutting back might seem like a way to stay safe. But we weren’t meant to disappear. We were meant to create, to connect, and to contribute.

So as we face whatever lies ahead,

let’s not focus only on what we must let go of. Let’s ask: What can I build now?

A stronger body? A richer connection? A new chapter?

Because whether it’s a country or a person, the path through crisis isn’t paved with cuts—it’s built with courage. And we’ve still got plenty of that.

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On the Stage, At Any Age

Wayne B. has always enjoyed going to the theatre. “It’s been a lifelong interest,” he says. That’s why, after volunteering for Vancouver’s Bard on the Beach for two years, he took the plunge to further his passion by joining Bard for Life—a programme founded in 2016 by Bard’s Director of Education, Mary Hartman, that brings Shakespeare’s words “to life.”

“It’s been a totally different experience than I’ve ever had before,” adds the financial services professional and festival patron. “While it’s daunting at first to delve into the speeches of Shakespearean characters, I’m now really enjoying the challenge of it.”

“Live theatre is a venue where anything can happen,” Wayne muses, after returning from a trip to London, UK, where he saw six theatre performances in seven days. “It’s more than entertainment. You get pulled in.”

Bard for Life is a programme for adults, “designed to be responsive to the needs of the participants,” says Hartman, “and it

supports people in their personal learning.”

Whether he sees himself going further in his on-stage interests doesn’t matter, says Wayne. For now, the experience of rehearsing speeches and mini-scenes with skilled actor-coaches — and then performing them in front of a live audience — refocuses his attention and provides a welcome contrast to a day of left-brain work.

It was also her love of theatre — and teaching Shakespeare to secondary school students in Surrey — that inspired Carolyn P. to re-engage with the stage.

“I’ve always loved public speaking, and I did theatre as a young adult,” she says. “I know the Shakespeare plays, especially the tragic ones that are part of the B.C. school curriculum, because I taught them all. After I retired, it seemed natural that I would pursue my own theatre interests in the Shakespeare world.”

“It was an opportunity to reinvent and reinform myself in my new role as a retiree.”

Joining the programme in 2024 and delivering her first monologue shortly thereafter, Carolyn says, “I thought I would die.” But once she’d completed her presentation, she saw it as a success.

She adds that she started to find a home for her creativity.



“Classroom teaching is a daily performance — putting all the pieces together for the students. Now I’m doing it for myself, and I love it,” says Carolyn.

“You have to look at everything about yourself and be prepared to take risks with that. The experience of performing in front of others stretches you.”

Studies on engagement in the theatre arts document mental and physical benefits, including improvements in memory, problem-solving, and cognitive functioning, along with the added value of social interaction.

Mary Hartman adds that everyone is welcome in the adult programme and respected in their learning, within the context of a collaborative community.

“Participants are coming in from vastly different life experiences, with various reasons and goals for attending. But they develop a generosity of spirit with each other and mutual support in their collective experience. It’s not competitive; it’s supportive — and it builds many new friendships.”

That collective spirit was evident in their end-of-season presentation at the BMO Theatre Centre in Vancouver. |

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CHRIS HADFIELD: Out of This World

by JENNIFER HARTLEY

It is no exaggeration to say that Commander Chris Hadfield is good at almost everything. Decorated fighter pilot, astronaut, first Canadian to walk in space, first Canadian to operate the Canadarm, first and only Canadian to board the MIR space station, first and only Canadian commander of the International Space Station, a talented musician, including as a musician in space. And now, added to that list is international keynote speaker, entrepreneur, and multiple international bestselling author. His face is everywhere on TED Talks, MasterClass and now, even in commercials.

While his successes are a huge source of pride for Canada, especially these days, they are not something he spends much time thinking about.

"If you're spending time looking back you're going to either miss or bump into your future. I am more interested in facing forward, in what's going on today and how can I help shape the productivity of things that are going on now and in the future."

While that may be the case, who can forget his hauntingly beautiful rendition of David Bowie's *Space Oddity* from the cosmos? He had better get used to hearing more about his accomplishments in the coming months as we approach the 30th anniversary of his first space flight in November, even if, for him, "the whole idea of an anniversary is arbitrary."

This chameleonic Canadian hero has the golden touch and his secret is laser focus and a heightened sense of perfection-

ism. His father, Roger Hadfield, the patriarch of the first family of flight (all three Hadfield sons are pilots) said those qualities have motivated Chris since he first became obsessed with space during the moon landing in 1969.

When Chris was safely in orbit during his second space flight in 2001 (he has been to space three times), the senior Hadfield said: "Chris always knew that he had to be the best to achieve what he wanted, and so, he was always the best."

While Chris makes it all look easy, it isn't.

"If you think you've learned it the easy way then you haven't learned it. You have to do the work if you want to accomplish something. I think the important thing is to set yourself complex goals and then work really hard to change yourself and change things to be able to allow you to succeed every single day."

Hadfield's Take on Life

With practical answers like oxygen, water and food for things he can't live without — spoken like a true scientist — don't be fooled into thinking that he is not philosophical or deep.

His take on spirituality? "I don't think any of us is brave enough to make it through life on our own. It is daunting and confusing and there's no rule book. Having a sense of being part of something that's greater than ourselves I think it's really important, whether that's a group that you belong to, something you believe, or it's an innate sense of spirituality and the enormity of history, of nature and life. But a lot of our conflict comes from people latching onto something and then deciding they alone have the correct answer to questions and then using it to degrade or harm other people. It is reprehensible."

While he has seen parts of our fantastic universe, the one thing that has surprised him more than anything was witnessing birth on Earth.

"The biggest prize I've had is to watch my child being born. It is such a humbling, significant and awe-inspiring thing to be a part of. It is brutal, painful and human, and for me to have been in the delivery room was a truly magnificent surprise."

He and his wife Helene, high school sweethearts, have three children. "We were in a play together and while I'm a terrible actor, I won the jackpot by meeting her."

While acting may not have grabbed him, music did.

"There was always music in our household. My mom is a fantastic piano player and a gifted singer. I'd like to be better at harmony singing myself. It is one of my goals. My brother and I bought a guitar when I was nine and in high school I learned to play the trombone. There were bands along the way including a marching band. Music has always been a part of my life."

The best piece of advice he has ever had? "Trust yourself."

For the average person that is one thing, but for an astronaut, that takes on a whole other meaning such as trusting your abilities and memory in space.

"You are leaving Earth and if there's a problem, often one





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of the first things you lose is communications. If you have an electrical problem or a vehicle control problem, they affect your ability to run radios and communications so that means anything can go wrong and no matter what, we had to deal with it. Someone getting electrocuted, having to reprogram the altitude control system or having a leak in the ship, whatever the undertaking, the memory task was enormous. To be able to remember everything and be able to do it on your own was an incredible challenge.”

While “motivated” and “hardworking” are not shocking ways he describes himself, “delighted” is a surprising word, and offers fabulous insight into his approach to life.

The wonderment he has for life is infectious and he has no time for regret.

“Don’t dwell on the path you can’t change. The only thing you have control over is what you’re going to do next, so try and do better next time based on what you learned from the past.”

With strong ties to the west, (his mother-in-law lives in Sydney and Chris attended Royal Roads), Chris has seen our neck of the world in a way none of us ever will during his 2,650 orbits around the world.

That experience, he says, “opened up all that is possible and, if anything, it just reinforces your sense of the uniqueness and the beauty of Earth but also the importance of recognizing our responsibility for being a good steward of our planet.”

What Does The Future Hold?

While Chris speaks Russian, French and English, he wants



Childbirth is one of the things that inspires awe in Chris Hadfield. His second grandchild was just born to his daughter.

Photo from Hadfield family album



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to learn other languages. He is also fascinated by archaeology, paleontology and geology. “Those are high on my list of subjects to study.”

“I set myself goals and then I try and change who I am...I try and do that thing as well as I can. I think that’s the secret to life --- dream about what you love, what you want your life to be. How are you making daily choices to make those things more and more part of what you are and what you do?”

One of the most rewarding things about this time in his life is once again around childbirth.

“My daughter has just given birth to a beautiful baby girl, Wren. It is magical to have my own daughter become a mother.”

He also has a nine-year-old granddaughter from his son and daughter-in-law, whom he “loves to death.”

“I couldn’t be luckier as a grandpa and that’s the most exciting thing in my life right now.”

He has schools and parks named after him, not to mention an asteroid, but the proof that his influence knows no bounds is the fact that he has a bee named after him. “Yes, I have an insect named after me.”

Is that the strangest honour? “Well,” he says, “strange is in the eye of the beholder, isn’t it?”

As he has explored the possible in his life, he has brought us along, taken us beyond our own imagination, inspiring us to reach for the stars. His next book comes out in the autumn and we await with great anticipation where he will take us next. |

The Caregiver's Heart: A Journey of Giving, A Call for Support

Even the most giving hearts
need time to rest and receive.



Understanding the Caregiver Role

Do you know someone who helps a loved one with meals, transportation, or medications? They might be among Canada's 8+ million family caregivers, though they may not see themselves as such. Often, they're simply fulfilling a natural role as daughters, sons, spouses, or friends.

Family caregivers provide vital support to a loved one from assisting with daily tasks like meals, appointments, and personal care, to offering emotional support and managing medical needs. Their dedication often goes unrecognized, yet they too require support. Acknowledging this role helps connect caregivers to resources, from community networks to caregiver groups, where shared experiences foster understanding and care.

Across Canada and in BC, 1 in 4 people are family caregivers, often providing 30+ hours of care each week while juggling emotional, financial, and physical demands. To keep caring for others, they need support for their own well-being.

Find Your Circle of Support

Caregiving can be a solitary journey, even when surrounded by others. Many caregivers describe feeling alone with their challenges, not wanting to burden others with their struggles. Yet connecting with others who understand can make all the difference. Support groups, caregiver resource centers, and community organizations offer practical assistance alongside something equally precious—companionship from others who truly understand the path you're walking.

Family Caregivers of BC offers free resources, workshops, and a compassionate caregiver support line (1-877-520-3267) where caregivers can find information, guidance, and a listening ear when the journey feels overwhelming.

Support a Caregiver You Know

If someone in your life is caring for a loved one, your kindness can make a big difference. Offer specific help, like picking up groceries, listen with empathy when they need to talk, and check in regularly to give them a break. Share caregiver resources with warmth and understanding, not pressure. Your support can bring light to their day.

Celebrate Caregiver Awareness Month

This May, during National Caregiver Awareness Month, we honour the millions of Canadians providing unpaid care to loved ones. The theme for this year, "Why Identifying as a Caregiver Matters," highlights how many caregivers don't connect with available support because they don't recognize themselves in the role. The Caregiver Awareness campaign raises awareness about the challenges caregivers face, including navigating healthcare systems, accessing support resources, and advocating for caregiver-friendly workplaces.

Get Involved: #CaregiverAware2025

- Visit the Family Caregivers of BC website for local and virtual events.
- Follow us on social media and share your voice in support of caregivers throughout May with the hashtag: #CaregiverAware2025
- Reach out to a caregiver with a card, meal, or offer of help.

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**Family Caregivers
of British Columbia**

THE DRYDEN FAMILY: Compassion for Kids on the Street

by JENNIFER HARTLEY

It all started in Pakistan. Murray Dryden, there on holiday, stumbled over a child sleeping in squalor in the street, and it triggered some unpleasant memories. His daughter Judy says that when she was old enough to understand, “Dad talked about his experiences during the Depression when he often struggled to find a place to sleep. The Pakistan experience was the impetus for him and Mum [Dryden’s wife Margaret] to develop a plan for helping children to have a more comfortable sleep.”

Murray teamed up with international partners and later went to Pune, India, where he provided 50 children in an orphanage with beds, using his own funds. Back home in Canada, when he talked about what he had done, friends jumped on

board and offered to help get more bedkits to vulnerable children.

And his mission took flight. In 1970, when Murray retired, he and Margaret created the charity Sleeping Children Around the World (SCAW). Fifty-five years later, it is a major success. Since 1970, 1,734,373 children in 34 countries have received a bedkit, and over \$52,000,000 has been invested in local economies in developing countries.

SCAW became a family affair, and all three of the Drydens’ children—Judy, Dave, and Ken (who, by the way, are the only two brother goalies to have played against each other in the National Hockey League) — have been involved with the organisation.

Judy is still very active with SCAW

Now retired, most of her career was spent as a public health nurse. “I was a hospital nurse in Ontario, and my first public health nursing job was in 1977 in Dawson Creek. Toronto to Dawson Creek in one easy step! After Dawson Creek, I worked in Langley, Vancouver, then Victoria,” where she now calls home.

“Mum and Dad started Sleeping Children Around the World when I was away studying nursing, so it wasn’t part of my everyday life. However, as the charity became established, I heard the stories about

Judy Dryden is proud of the organization her parents started to help children on the streets. Every bedkit is curated to match the needs of the children in the country in which they are distributed.

Dad’s travels and fundraising, and the living situations of the children he saw. I participated in my first bedkit distribution when I was 55, and since then, I have been on 13 distributions to Bangladesh, India, Nicaragua, and Uganda.”

She says one of the unique features of SCAW is that 100 per cent of donations for bedkits go directly to children. “We do not use any advertising or mail campaigns. All of our supporters come to us by word of mouth.”

All operating and administrative costs are covered by an endowment fund established by her parents, overseen by one paid staff member: the executive director.

“In the 1950s, my dad bought three Christmas tree farms as a hobby. When he sold them, the money went into the legacy fund. We now hold one fundraiser a year to replenish that fund, and the house I grew up in is the SCAW headquarters — and none of the décor has changed.”

Most of her career centred on working with children and their families.

“I knew when I retired I wanted to help children in other countries, and SCAW was a natural fit. I also like being part of a team, and SCAW is all about teamwork.”

While she no longer makes the harrowing trips (“they are not for the faint of heart”), she is now working on the SCAW digital archives, “which is funny as I am new to all of this technology, but I am learning new skills and my kids help me.”

So just what’s in a bedkit? Well, that depends on the country. But everything starts with either a mat or mattress and a mosquito net. Judy explains that “some countries don’t use mattresses — they will use a mat. In some places, there are pillows; others not. In some places, a fleece jacket or blanket is included. Others, it is footwear. It is local knowledge that makes the difference and informs the kit contents. And every child receives an outfit or two.”

The Overseas Volunteer Partners source everything locally, and local manufacturers and cottage industries are used whenever possible.



Some locations include a math set. Judy says that while it may seem like an odd item to provide, without a math set in some countries, kids aren't allowed to study, "so we make sure they have one."

In another country, a plate, cup, and bowl are provided. "Children who go to government schools have a meal at lunch but have to provide dishes. So the bedkits are suited to each geographical location."

One of the moving and defining features of SCAW is that it is run entirely by volunteers—on the ground in the countries, and as the bedkit distributors. By the time volunteers from Canada arrive for a bedkit distribution adventure, hours of volunteer work have been donated to create the bedkits. As mentioned, the trips are not for the faint-hearted.

The experience of participating, fully funded by the participant, "is not a touristy kind of thing. Sometimes there is 24-hour travel time to get to the destination, then you hit the ground running on bumpy roads in rough buses. You have to be comfortable sleeping under a mosquito net, in the heat, adjusting to the climate and different food."

But Judy explains that, for many, the experience is a life-changing event. She laughs that "you don't worry about lineups at Tims anymore." The rewards are enormous.

"Distributions are such a joyous occasion. We organise fun activities with the children while they're waiting to have their photo taken with the sample bedkit. (Every donor receives a picture of their child and the bedkit.) That's one of the best parts of the day! We bring along bubbles, puppets, balls — anything else we can think of to entertain them. 'Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes' and the 'Hokey Pokey' translate into any language, and the kids think it's funny to see these strange adults making fools of themselves."

Bedkit recipients are children aged six to twelve, half girls, half boys, representative of all ethnicities and religions in the country. Additional guidelines ensure that SCAW focuses on countries with less than CAD \$8,500 Gross National Income (GNI) per capita.

The impact of SCAW is life-changing for the children and their families as well. They get the basics for a good night's sleep that every child deserves. Growing brains need that sleep and rest — and thanks to SCAW, so many receive it. |

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Check out this month's interview with JUDY DRYDEN at www.seniorlivingmag.com/podcast





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A few lines in your will could impact generations of Island families

- Tom Arnold, Executive Director, Eldercare Foundation

If you're an older adult, retiree, or even a caregiver to an aging loved one, *you* are an expert. You understand the many issues that seniors face – social isolation, loneliness, living with chronic illnesses, facing the spectre of dementia, etc. – far better than anyone younger. You likely also care about these issues far more than anyone younger too.

At Eldercare Foundation, we see this reflected in those who make donations to help improve care and quality of life for seniors in need. Most are adults aged 65 plus.

While these adults have more interest in ensuring local seniors receive quality care and support, many feel constrained in the difference they can make. We often hear comments like, "I wish I could give more, but I'm not very rich" or "I wish I could give more, but I'm living on a fixed income." They are often surprised to learn that many of the most impactful gifts that Eldercare has ever received are from people just like them.



Since 1982, many of the donations to Eldercare that most impacted the care available to seniors have been legacy gifts made via a will.

Eldercare was established in 1982 thanks to a legacy gift from the estate of Margaret Nicholson, then a resident at Glengarry long-term care home who left a portion of her estate to the foundation. It was a larger gift than she likely could have afforded in her lifetime but, as a bequest, it provided entertainment and support for other Glengarry residents for more than 35 years!

Eldercare received another legacy gift in 1983 from Ruth Gardner, a local psychologist and social worker who dedicated her life to helping others. Her estate gift of \$53,215 seeded the Ruth A. Gardner Research Award to support research projects aimed at improving care for seniors. Now more than \$150,000 in research grants later, Ruth's legacy lives on and continues to grow.

Eldercare has been the grateful recipient of more than a hundred legacy gifts in the years since those two bequests. In 2013, we received \$141,000 from the estate of Sooke resident George Haslett. He knew about the West Shore Adult Day Program and wanted to make sure that those services would be available to others.

Every pillar of Eldercare's work has enjoyed its biggest advancements because of gifts made via a will. Yet very few of the people who made these gifts would ever be considered affluent. They were simply experts in the trials and tribulations of aging who found a way to help others without impacting their own quality of life, or their ability to support their loved ones.

With a few lines in your will, you could make an impact across generations of Island families, too.

To learn more about legacy giving, speak with a trusted financial advisor or contact Tom Arnold at 250-370-5640 or tom@eldercarefoundation.org. *Eldercare Foundation of Vancouver Island is a registered charity that believes all seniors deserve the chance to age with dignity.*

The Penguins of Patagonia

by JOHN THOMSON

The captain cuts the engine and the catamaran drifts closer to shore. I'm aboard a shallow-draft passenger ferry — with an onboard bar, no less — approaching Martillo Island in the Argentine half of the Beagle Channel. It's home to a colony of Magellanic penguins. Magellanics stand about a metre tall and are distinguished by two black bands of feathers between their head and chest. They are the most common penguin species in this part of Patagonia.

The vessel is now mere metres from the shoreline, allowing us to get up close and personal. The penguins couldn't care less. They're unafraid and unperturbed.

Leopard seals and giant petrels are their natural enemies — we're not — and the Magellanics waddle across the beach without a care in the world.

This is Patagonia: home of the Andes, the pampas, and the gaucho — the Patagonian cowboy. The region is rich in history. Explorers, adventurers, and scoundrels have all passed through these parts at one time or another and are immortalized in Bruce Chatwin's epic memoir *In Patagonia*, a journey he took by bus and on foot in 1977. If I were fifty years younger, I would have done the same thing — but I've opted for a guided tour starting in Chile, sweeping around Cape Horn, and ending up in Buenos Aires. I'm looking for penguins, not scoundrels.

Chile and Argentina meet at Tierra del Fuego, at the bottom of the continent. Punta Arenas is in Chile; Ushuaia is in Argentina. Both consider themselves the

world's southernmost settlement — depending, of course, on whom you talk to. Punta Arenas, a pleasant and unpretentious community, is steeped in explorer history and is home to several full-sized replicas: Magellan's *Nao Victoria*, which circumnavigated the globe in 1520; Darwin's *HMS Beagle*; and the *James Caird*, the rowboat Ernest Shackleton and his five crewmates sailed to safety after Antarctic ice crushed their ship *HMS Endurance* in 1915.

For the record, Ushuaia wins the southernmost title by a smidge, and it's the port I use to continue my nautical journey to the bottom of the world.

I'm chasing two other penguin species: the Chinstrap and the Gentoo. They also reside in Patagonian waters but have migrated south to Antarctica to mate, driven by an instinctive — if not fully understood — loyalty to their favourite rookery.

First, we must cross the Drake Passage, arguably the most dangerous body of water in the world. The clash of Pacific and Atlantic currents can whip the sea into waves eight metres high. I'm glad I'm aboard a modern vessel and not the *Nao Victoria* of 500 years ago. I survive the crossing — others get seasick.

And then, as suddenly as it began, the wind dies down and beautifully shaped icebergs drift by. We have crossed the Drake. There's activity at the stern.

Something is chasing the boat — too big for fish but too small for dolphins.

"They're penguins," says Natalia, our onboard biologist. Thankfully, there

are naturalists aboard to put things in perspective.

As we enter the Antarctic Peninsula, I spot a colony of Chinstrap penguins — so called because of a line of black fur extending from their chins to their ears — atop a scrubby, rocky hill on Half Moon Island. The hill looks inaccessible to me.

Penguins waddle. They don't climb, do they?

"Oh yes they do," says Natalia. Or to be more precise, "they hop, using their long, sharp claws for added purchase."

Natalia fills in the blanks. She tells us interlocking feathers and blubber deposits on their feet and flippers keep penguins warm in harsher climes. In addition, a gland near the tail excretes an oily substance that keeps their coats waterproof.

"If you see a penguin preening, that's what it's doing," she says, "spreading that oil over its body with its flippers."

Penguins ingest a lot of salt living and feeding in the ocean, and their kidneys alone can't cope. Again, nature has provided the appropriate tool: a gland in the skull just above the eye filters out excess salt and excretes it as a discharge. Who knew?

As we sail deeper into the peninsula, scrubby hills turn into snowy mountains with glaciers spilling into the sea. We turn north to the Falkland Islands.

Despite the isolation — or maybe because of it — the hardy inhabitants of this windswept outcropping have carved out a slice of Blighty for themselves. The Falkland-Malvinas (its official designation) is home to sheep, English pubs (lots of them), and a Gentoo rookery close to the sea.

Gentoo penguins have orange beaks and legs, and a white band over their heads — and it's here that I learn about penguin family life.

Gentoo males arrive first to build a nest, using their feet to shovel stones and rocks into a circle. Some other species dig a trough. Female penguins arrive separately, mate, and lay one or two eggs. Both parents take turns incubating the eggs for about a month, and when they hatch, Mom and Dad alternate returning





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PAGE 12 | Magellanic penguins at rest, Martillo Island, Argentina

TOP | Paradise Bay, Antarctica

ABOVE | Central Buenos Aires, Argentina

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to the sea to bring back food for their offspring.

Penguin child-rearing is very human-like. In fact, I've heard penguins are monogamous, attached to their partner for life.

"I'm sorry to disappoint you," says Natalia. "A penguin's goal in life is to have dependents. If I have a partner," she says, as if she were a Gentoo herself, "and we don't do well — we can't raise even one chick — why would I stay with that partner? I'm going to get a new partner next year."

She quotes studies showing that after three years with the same partner, the penguin "divorce rate" is about 50 per cent.

Penguins, she says, want results. If they're unhappy with their mate, they move on.

Yep, just like humans, I think to myself.

Antarctica was magical — peaceful and serene — eliciting a reverence for the location and the wildlife. We sailed slowly through the peninsula to reduce engine noise and vibration. International law required it. On deck, everyone spoke in hushed tones.

Disembarking in Buenos Aires was an aural and visual culture shock.

What can I say about Buenos Aires, a city of three million teeming with energy, life, and the dance of the tango? Yes, I attended the obligatory tourist tango show — and I was blown away. Dramatic and flamboyant.

That also describes the streetscape: modern steel-and-glass towers interspersed with ornate 19th-century façades, lots of parks and green spaces, and unique attractions found only in B.A. — like La Recoleta, a sea of statuary and mausoleums that includes the burial tomb of Eva Perón. People are still placing flowers at her gravesite 70 years after her death.

Argentinian politics are complex — but that's another story.

Buenos Aires was eye-opening. So was my penguin pursuit, because it dispelled some myths. Sure, penguins look ungainly — even cute — but they're surprisingly swift and adept at getting around.

Photographs don't do them justice. I had to see them for myself, in their natural habitat. I'm sure the ever-curious Bruce Chatwin would have approved. |



PETRA: Rose City of Jordan

by LINDA BLAIR

If you're tired of the mundane and looking for adventure somewhere other than the ordinary, then look to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Here, you can hike through history, swim in the Dead Sea, and discover the wonders of Wadi Rum.

Lost cities and ancient civilisations are what legends and movies are made of, so open the doors to your imagination and follow me to the ancient Kingdom of Jordan.

Petra, more than 2,300 years old, draws more than one million visitors annually. Cave dwellings, massive colonnaded structures, and a Roman amphitheatre, shouldered alongside numerous impressive monuments, are just a few of the edifices you will encounter here.

In the southern region of Jordan lies the desert of Wadi Rum, and here's where you'll find the hand-carved city of Petra. Surrounded by towering rock formations carved by centuries of desert storms and whistling winds, this lost city dates back to 169 BC and sits amidst a silent land-

scape of rock and sand.

The Arab Nabataean people who settled the area between the Dead Sea and Red Sea chiselled Petra out of the surrounding pink mountain slopes.

The Nabataeans had a strong aptitude for irrigation, as well as a talent for sculpting and decorating in stone.

This city, riddled with temples, tombs, and cave dwellings—all carved using ancient chisels and hammers—will have you pondering the question “How?” The level of engineering achieved at that time boggles the mind.

Through modern technology and satellite imagery, it's believed only 25–30 per cent of the city has been uncovered. Therefore, Petra continues to attract archaeologists and their teams from around the world to unearth more of this lost city's buried treasure.

Located in the crosshairs of caravan trails linking Mediterranean countries and beyond, this centre of trade once housed 30,000 inhabitants. However, much like the ever-changing direction of the wind,

changing trade routes contributed greatly to the demise of Petra.

The Nabataean tribes eventually left the area, and only the nomadic Bedouins knew of this deserted city until 1812, when it was rediscovered by a Swiss explorer.

Johann Burckhardt, disguised as a nomadic traveller while touring Middle Eastern countries, heard many tales of a lost city. So intrigued was he that his sole mission became finding the lost “Rose City.”

Petra is not immediately visible due to its location within the surrounding mountains. Today, a short drive from the modern town of Wadi Musa will take you to the Visitors' Centre and main entrance to the Siq (slot canyon).

Camels, donkeys, and horse-drawn buggies are available for hire to take you through this impressive, winding 1.3 km natural rock canyon. Walking, however, will better allow you to absorb the splendour and beauty of it all.

This journey of discovery begins on a

wide path leading towards the canyon. Massive Djinn blocks (hand-carved, weathered stones) can be seen along the way. Faint drawings and inscriptions in Arabic can still be seen; however, most have long since eroded. Researchers suggest these large stones represented the Nabataean gods.

Many religious monuments, symbols, niches, and inscriptions are carved into the walls on both sides of the footpath. It's believed they were meant to protect the city and offer blessings for a safe journey to travellers.

The gently sloping path narrows as you approach the entrance to the Siq. Immediately spellbound by the raw and natural beauty of the gorge, one's mind conjures up images of lively caravans of traders who travelled this canyon centuries ago. Listen to the whispers of the past as you explore this canyon. The rock colour changes continuously as the rising sun casts its shadow upon these towering walls. Excitement propels me.

Suddenly, as though peering through a keyhole, a sliver of the site presents itself. Rounding the final bend lands me directly in front of Al Khazneh (The

Treasury). The sheer size and detailing are outstanding and completely capture and fuel the imagination. Travel magazines are saturated with photos of this one astonishing sight. However, compared to the vastness of this historical location, this one structure materialises as a murmur in the crowd.

Many superbly carved tombs are sculpted into two or three stories of differently coloured rock.

The Royal Tombs (a cluster of four tombs) should not be missed. The Urn Tomb contains a large inner chamber believed to have been converted to a church in 446 AD. The Corinthian Tomb contains four burial chambers, while the largest Palace Tomb consists of three levels and four entrances. It's alleged that the lower level was used for religious ceremonies celebrating the dead.

The last and most dramatically coloured tomb is the Silk Tomb, with the name thought to have derived from the vibrant colours encrusted in the stone, like layered silk scarves. So unusual at first sight, it appears to be fabricated, but upon closer inspection, you can identify the natural colours of the rock.

Centuries of desert winds can be felt on your fingertips as you sweep them across the smoothness of the cool stone.

A strong Roman influence is perceived in the Treasury and Monastery, as well as a Roman theatre constructed in the centre of the city. The theatre consists of 45 rows of seats chiselled from stone and once sat 6,000 people. Badly deteriorated, it still remains an impressive site.

A lesser-known path, often referred to as the "back door," leads you into another remarkable slot canyon called Siq al-Barid (Cold Canyon). This northern entrance leads straight into "Little Petra," where you'll find an added complex of intricately carved temples and monuments, including many of the caves that once housed the Bedouin populace.

With fewer people knowing this alternate route, getting around is much easier and offers more opportunities to enter the temples and caves.

One impressive cave contains two large rooms with sleeping quarters, a fire pit, and a sink for washing—all carved into the rock. Most of it would have been covered with warm carpets and blankets.

Due to its size, this specific cave is



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believed to have been used for important travellers stopping overnight.

Little Petra was considered an ideal stopover location for caravans travelling the Silk Road. From here, an 8 km trail leads directly into the heart of Petra.

This entire area has been inhabited by Bedouin tribes since ancient times. Many older-generation Bedouins continue the old ways in order to hold onto their traditions. However, it appears today that Petra sits on the periphery of the ancient and western world.

In 1985, the government forcibly repositioned the Bedouin people into housing overlooking the city. The idea behind the move was to allow archaeologists and their teams to carry on with excavations unimpeded.

As a compromise for the relocation, Bedouin people are permitted to continue working inside Petra as shopkeepers, guides, restaurateurs, and transporters.

These public services provide a decent living for the Bedouin population still living there. Infused throughout the site are shops selling beautiful hand-carved jewellery, raw incense, scarves, bags, and assorted souvenirs of Petra.

Even though Petra is Jordan's largest tourist draw, this country has many outstanding and noteworthy cities and sites worth visiting. The excitement and wonder of the country's diverse landscape have served as a backdrop for several movies.

Mt. Nebo, believed by many to be the location of Moses's death, has been a

pilgrimage destination since early Christian times. Stunning panoramic views and thought-provoking sites surround the Memorial of Moses.

In close-by Madaba, the ancient Byzantine mosaics located inside St. George Church are some of the finest in the world, including a mosaic map of the Middle East.

Enter Jerash through Hadrian's Wall to stroll those ancient streets. Extremely well-preserved Roman colonnaded avenues and soaring hilltop temples can be seen, while the sound of pipers echoes throughout the Hippodrome Theatre.

Not far from the capital city of Amman stands the ancient Karak Castle, constructed during the Crusades and later expanded and refortified. Striking views overlook the city from this vantage point.

Watersports abound in Aqaba. The crystal-clear waters of the Red Sea have some of the most remarkable reefs and dive sites in the world. People flock here from

PAGE 15 | Petra Treasury

ABOVE LEFT | The path to Petra

ABOVE | Fresh ingredients stimulate your taste buds

around the globe to dive in these waters.

Want more adventure? Experience travel by camel through the desert of Wadi Rum. Stay at an authentic Bedouin desert camp and sleep in a goat-hair tent. Sit around a campfire under a cobalt-blue, star-studded sky while listening to storytellers explain the local folklore.

Jordanian food is prepared with only the freshest ingredients and spices to stimulate the taste buds. Creamy yoghurts, fresh olives, dates, currants, meats, chicken, and fragrant rice or couscous are just a small sampling of what you might find on the table. The traditional dish of "Mansaf" is a must-try if you like lamb.

For a more enriching experience, hire a local guide and feel the history of Jordan come alive. I'm glad I did! |



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CHAT GTP For Seniors: Yes or No?

by VERENA FOXX

I was recently a passenger in a car travelling from the historic seaside town of Paraty, Brazil, back to São Paulo—a 4.5-hour journey, if all goes well.

My New York friend and I were joined by a Brazilian photographer in his 50s and his 35-year-old partner, who was driving.

The four of us had just spent a few days together attending a memorial tribute for my friend's late husband, who had died suddenly in Paraty during an earlier photography festival hosted by his Brazilian friend.

On our return journey, the conversation turned to the future—and how best to prepare young people for the global workforce they are likely to face.

The Brazilian father, who has two sons aged 16 and 20, said he had advised them that fluency in both English and artificial intelligence would be essential to navigate the future successfully—regardless of the profession they chose. His eldest was already studying medicine.

As a new grandmother to a one-year-old growing up in New York City—and already holding three citizenships—I took his comments seriously.

I began to wonder what I might need to learn about AI in order to understand and communicate with my granddaughter in her future world.

Encouraged by our sharp young driver during the long ride, I downloaded the ChatGPT app and began asking it questions—while also being warned that every question would contribute to the digital profile AI was building about me.

Eventually, on behalf of my demographic, I asked: HOW IS CHATGPT USEFUL FOR SENIORS?

What follows below was generated in seconds.

Please read it with the understanding that it was created by Artificial Intelligence, drawing from a wide range of sources.

(I'm pretty sure I won't be looking for companionship from AI, like #3 suggests.)

ChatGPT offers many benefits for senior citizens, making it a valuable tool for enhancing daily life, communication and learning.

Here are some practical ways it can be helpful:

1. Health and Wellness Support

- **Medical Information:** ChatGPT can provide general health information, explain medical terms, and offer insights into common age-related conditions like arthritis or high blood pressure. It's essential, however, for seniors to consult medical professionals for personal medical advice.
- **Mental Wellness:** For those seeking companionship for cognitive stimulation, ChatGPT offers engaging conversation, memory exercises, and tips for mental health practices like mindfulness.

2. Tech Help and Digital Skills

- **Device Assistance:** ChatGPT can guide seniors on using smartphones, tablets, or computers – whether setting up email, navigating apps, or troubleshooting common tech issues.
- **Learning New Skills:** Seniors interested in social media, online shopping, or video calling with family can ask ChatGPT for tutorials, making it easier to stay connected and independent.

3. Staying Connected and Reducing Isolation

- **Communication Support:** ChatGPT can help seniors compose emails, text messages, or even provide conversation tips. It can also suggest ways to engage with family and friends on platforms like Facebook or WhatsApp.
- **Companionship:** For seniors who may feel isolated ChatGPT offers an interactive, conversational experience that provides comfort, shares stories, or simply offers someone to chat with.

4. Entertainment and Hobbies

- **Recommendations:** ChatGPT can suggest books, movies, or music tailored to seniors' preferences, helping them discover new interests.
- **Games and Trivia:** Seniors can enjoy brain games, trivia, and memory exercises, promoting cognitive engagement in a fun and accessible way.
- **Crafts and Cooking:** for seniors who enjoy creative hobbies, ChatGPT can provide recipes, craft ideas, or step-by-step guidance for hands-on activities.

5. Learning and Personal Growth

- **New Knowledge:** ChatGPT can be a resource for seniors who enjoy lifelong learning, offering information on history, science, art, and other areas of interest.
- **Language and Memory:** For seniors practising a new language or working to keep memory skills sharp, ChatGPT can provide vocabulary exercises or conversation practice in various languages.

6. Assistance with Everyday Tasks

- **Reminders and Organization:** While ChatGPT can't set reminders directly, it can offer suggestions for planning and organizing tasks, helping seniors keep track of appointments, medications, or shopping lists.
- **Financial Literacy:** ChatGPT can provide general advice on budgeting, managing expenses, and avoiding online scams, which is particularly useful as seniors navigate financial independence.

ChatGPT is a flexible tool for seniors, offering everything from companionship to practical assistance. It's not a replacement for professional support, but it can complement seniors' lives in a way that empowers them and keeps them connected.

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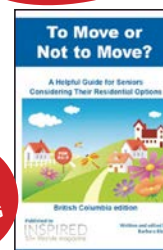
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LIVING ON PURPOSE

by LAURIE MUELLER

Staying Inspired Amid Chaos

How do you stay inspired when so many things around you are falling apart?

You might think about your leaky faucet or the peeling paint, your arthritic knees, current events, or money problems.

As I write this, I'm sitting in my little Mexican Airbnb suite, run by the family who lives below us with their three children. As I ruminate on what to say in this column, little three-year-old Sam (a sweetheart most of the time) is screaming over and over. I think it's significant, in light of what I'm writing. There are many moments these days when we just want to throw our heads back and scream, too.

There is so much going wrong in the world today, and as my Facebook friends have expanded, I've learned of even more events and issues that people are struggling with.

So much to be fixed. And perhaps, in your lifetime, you've had the opportunity to fix some things—while watching other things fall apart.

Some people wonder how they can keep going. I don't mean to be a downer. Instead, I want to give you hope, focus, or a goal to aim for. You can still have a life with purpose—a life that brings you and others joy, or at least some respite.

Whatever your age, your life can still be of service—not just to others, but also to yourself.

While in Mexico, I could look out from our rooftop patio and see a variety of scenes. There were mountains and the ocean on either side, showcasing the beauty of the area. I could also look down and see garbage piling up on the street. I could focus on the empty lot

next door, with weeds growing wild.

I'd see the many little entrepreneurs making a living selling fruits and vegetables, confectionery items, tacos, beer—or I could complain about the noisy vehicles. I did complain to my husband about the people gathering outside the beer shop next door, partying into the night and disturbing my peace and quiet. But when we walked past them on our way home, those same people would greet us and invite us to join them.

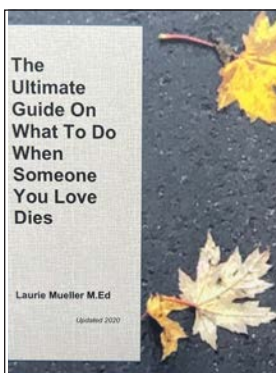
You see, no matter how hard things get around us, there are always things we can cheer for, appreciate, and be thankful for.

There are little things we can do for others that won't change the world—but they might change one person's day.

When I was a teenager, I read a book about Corrie ten Boom, who was in a Nazi concentration camp. She made it her mission to focus on what she could do to make even the smallest possible difference each day. I have never forgotten that.

Norma was an 80-something woman who lived in the seniors' residence I operated. She would sit in the window and hold up signs that said, "Hello" or "Have a Good Day," and people hurrying by on the busy street would stop, look up, and smile. Even years later, when people find out where I worked, they still tell me about Norma and how she brightened their days.

I want to say: be a Norma. Be a Corrie. Be someone who finds small ways to brighten your own day—and someone else's. Accentuate the positives, and share them (no matter how big or how small) with those who need them right now. |



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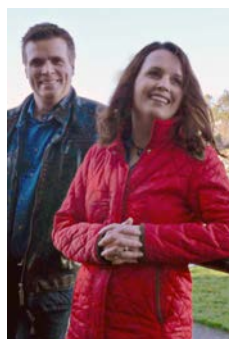
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Six artists from Artishow Victoria are exhibiting, providing demonstrations, and selling their work. Enter to win this amazing 18"x24" giclee print on canvas by Maureen Ness.



Come join us for a full day of entertainment, emcee'd by veteran broadcasters Michael Forbes and Lisa Marshall. Their friendly banter will keep you smiling.

11:15 AM
CBC Radio's *Quirks & Quarks* host **BOB McDONALD**, featured on the cover of *INSPIRED* Magazine in March, will join us to talk about how saying "yes" can change your life.



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